

TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR INDIVIDUAL CONSULTANTS AND CONTRACTORS

Title	Funding Code	Type of engagement	Duty Station:
Consultant to review the National Minimum standards for Early Child care centres in Nigeria	RR	Consultant – Deliverable based	Remote

Background and Purpose of the Assignment

Nigeria has an estimated population of 206 million, an estimated 44 percent of which is below the age of 15¹. With an average growth rate of 2.5 percent per annum², Nigeria is also one of the fastest-growing countries in the world, and its population is projected to reach 263 million in 2030, a 44 percent increase from 2015. According to current projections, by 2050, 1 of every 13 births globally will take place in Nigeria³. This presents, on one hand, a unique opportunity to leverage high growth rates to accelerate Nigeria’s development and, on the other, a significant challenge to ensure that adequate planning, sufficient resources, and quality social services are made available for the bulging child and youth population.

The first five years of a child’s life is a critical period for their cognitive, social, emotional, and physical development. The experiences during this period have a major impact on their future. Research has shown that a child’s newly developing brain is highly plastic and responsive to change as billions of integrated neural circuits are established through the interaction of genetics, environment, and experience. Optimal brain development requires a stimulating environment, adequate nutrients, and social interaction with attentive caregivers. Unsafe conditions, negative interactions, and lack of educational opportunities during these early years can lead to irreversible negative outcomes, which can affect a child’s potential for the remainder of his or her life.

In recent years, government and parental investments in Early Childhood Care, Development and Education (ECCDE) have expanded dramatically in many parts of the world. Despite the overall increase in the number of children accessing pre-primary education, in many countries, enrollment rates remain unequal, with more access to pre-primary education for children in higher-income countries and families. Research has shown that quality provision is essential for ensuring that children benefit from pre-primary education, and the emphasis on fast expansion raises questions on the quality of provision (Woodhead et al., 2009), especially given the low level of training and support received by many early childhood educators (Mitter & Putcha, 2017; Neuman, Josephson, & Chua, 2015). Also, many countries have high rates of private provision (Samman, 2016), creating complex systems of education and care for young children with a wide range of quality.

Government quality standards can help clarify the characteristics of high-quality settings and serve as the basis for monitoring and improving quality over time, for both public and private settings. The content of quality standards, as well as how they are implemented through monitoring systems, can have a profound influence on whether or not early childhood education (ECE) provides the anticipated returns

¹ Nigeria National Development Plan (2021-2025) Ministry of National Planning, Budget, and Finance

² World Bank. (2021). Population growth – Nigeria [Data set].

³ UNICEF. (2017). *Generation 2030 Africa 2.0. Prioritizing investments in children to reap the demographic dividend*. New York: UNICEF.

on investments (Burchinal, 2018), as it is not uncommon for ECE to fall short of expectations for promoting equity in education.

According to the National Policy on Education (NPE), Government's responsibilities for ECCDE includes "to regulate and control the operations of pre-primary education..." With private provision of ECCDE in Nigeria at approximately 49% (NPA 2018) with 48,348 private ECCDE schools for 3,496,486 learners across the country, there is a need to review the common procedures for accreditation of public and private preschools and track compliance.

Given that it is more than fifteen years since the minimum standards were developed, with no review carried out, FME through the support of UNICEF will undertake a comprehensive review of the minimum standards for operators and stakeholders so that both the practice and operation of ECCDE is standardized and adequately regulated across Nigeria. This process will be led by the Federal Ministry of Education with the participation of other national and state level actors for ownership, alignment, and harmonization by all relevant line ministries of the FME.

Scope of Work:

The overall scope of work of the consultancy will be to support the Federal Ministry of Education in reviewing and updating the Minimum standards for ECCDE centres in Nigeria and corresponding implementation guidelines.

Under the supervision of Education Specialist, the consultant will be responsible for the following over the course of the 6-months contract:

1. **Review the current national minimum standards for ECCDE centers:** Conduct a desk review and a series of Focus Group Discussions (FGDs)/Key Informant Interviews (KIIs) with the relevant stakeholders. These include but not limited to the ECD Directors and desk officers at FME, State Universal Basic Education Board (SUBEBs) and State Ministries of Education (SMoE), ECD desk officers and Directors from the various line ministries (Health, Women Affairs, Water resources), teachers and caregivers (from private and public providers), parents and community members, Non-Government Organisations (NGOs) and Civil Society Organisations (CSOs). The analytical points and research questions to be addressed in the review include, but not limited to:
 - To what extent are the minimum standards aligned with national and international evidence of best practices for early learning and development standards (including principles such as the early identification of children with disabilities and early intervention, nurturing care, and other key frameworks and theories for early childhood education)?
 - To what extent are the minimum standards inclusive and focused on reaching the most marginalized children in Nigeria (including specific population groups such as children with disabilities, children from the poorest families, children in conflict-affected communities and on the move, etc.)?
 - To what extent are the minimum standards relevant to state and local contexts?
 - To what extent are the minimum standards reflective of existing evidence that points towards a strong focus on teacher/child interactions and developmentally appropriate curricula?
 - To what extent are the minimum standards reflective of the child's holistic development?
 - To what extent do the minimum standards demonstrate clear alignment of quality service standards with staff and curricular standards?
 - To what extent are the minimum standards contextualized to meet the specific needs of children within their immediate environment?

- To what extent do the minimum standards focus on the progressive realization of children's rights in early childhood (namely through the principle of progressive universalism)?
 - To what extent do the current standards address the responsibilities of key actors to ensure its implementation, and are effective monitoring and evaluation mechanisms and processes in place and operational to support this?
 - To what extent have the standard's guide been followed by private and public ECCDE providers and what are the key enablers of and barriers to this?
 - What are remaining gaps and key challenges undermining the full application of the existing minimum standards and recommendations?
 - What innovative approaches should be employed and to what extent can these appropriately aligned with the minimum standards priorities and in support of their achievement?
2. **Define what minimum standards mean in the various categories of ECCDE settings** (for ages 0-2 years; 3-4 years and 3-5 years; they may be home based, centre based, or mobile) in Nigeria – considering the process and structural quality.
 3. **Develop first draft of the revised National Minimum Standards for ECCDE and implementation guidelines:** The consultant will edit and revise the current minimum standards to include key recommendations across content and approaches based directly on the review conducted, paying particular attention to cross-cutting issues including gender, inclusion and use of technology. The consultant will participate in consultations with the Steering committee, ECE national working group (NWG) and other relevant stakeholders across the geopolitical zones including but not limited to ECD stakeholders, parents and teachers, school leaders and community leaders to agree beforehand on the structure of the document and to facilitate a review of the draft by the Steering committee to gather and document the feedback.
 4. **Develop a second draft of the standards:** Based on the feedback provided in the first draft, revise and develop a second draft of the standards. The consultant will be expected to present the drafts to all stakeholders for national level critique.
 5. **Final policy document, implementation guidelines and slide deck:** Based on the feedback received on the second draft, finalize the documents for submission and share a well curated and formatted slide deck on the minimum standards and the implementation guidelines. These will be finalized with endorsement from the steering committee and ECE NWG.
 6. **Validation:** The consultant will be expected to deliver a presentation and actively participate in a national workshop for the dissemination of the revised ECCDE minimum standards.
 7. **Knowledge management:** The consultant will be expected to create an online shared folder of all documents reviewed, minutes of consultations, and the draft and final versions of all deliverables and share them with UNICEF.

Child Safeguarding

Is this project/assignment considered as "[Elevated Risk Role](#)" from a child safeguarding perspective?

YES NO If YES, check all that apply:

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Direct contact role	YES	NO	
<p>If yes, please indicate the number of hours/months of direct interpersonal contact with children, or work in their immediately physical proximity, with limited supervision by a more senior member of personnel:</p> <div style="border: 1px solid black; height: 20px; width: 100%;"></div>			
Child data role	YES	NO	
<p>If yes, please indicate the number of hours/months of manipulating or transmitting personal-identifiable information of children (name, national ID, location data, photos):</p> <div style="border: 1px solid black; height: 20px; width: 100%;"></div>			
<p>More information is available in the Child Safeguarding SharePoint and Child Safeguarding FAQs and Updates</p>			

Budget Year:	Requesting Section/Issuing Office:	Reasons why consultant cannot be done by staff:	
2023	Education/Abuja	<p>This position involves extensive technical engagement on the development and review of the national minimum standards and technical guides, alongside regular coordination with multiple stakeholders (including UNICEF, the government and CSOs).</p>	
Included in Annual/Rolling Workplan: Yes No, please justify:			
Consultant sourcing:		Request for:	
<p>National International Both</p> <p>Consultant selection method:</p> <p>Competitive Selection (Roster)</p> <p>Competitive Selection (Advertisement/Desk Review/Interview)</p>		<p>New Individual Contract</p> <p>Extension/ Amendment</p>	
If Extension, Justification for extension:			
Supervisor:	Start Date:	End Date:	Number of Days (working)

Deliverables/Outputs:	Timeline	Payment schedule
1. An inception report (between 8 and 10 pages)	5 days	20%
2. Develop KII, FGD instruments for the review of the national minimum standards 3. Facilitate seven (7) Workshops and Meetings/consultations a. state/ six geopolitical zones b. National consultations and produce a comprehensive report from the national and zonal consultations – max 15 pages	20 days	20%
4. First draft of the National Minimum standards and the supporting guidance documents 5. Present first draft to the steering committee for review 6. Develop a second draft of Minimum standards and guidance documents 7. Present to the steering committee for critique / validation	7 days 1 day 3 days 1 days	35%
8. Final review and produce final Minimum standards and guidance documents. Final document must be copy-edited and formatted 9. Slides deck prepared for use at the validation workshop and submission of any knowledge management products.	8 days	25%

Estimated deliverable fees		
1. An inception report submitted.		20%
2. National and zonal consultations completed		20%
3. Three drafts of Minimum standards and guidance documents developed and reviewed		35%
4. Final Minimum standards document and implementation guideline produced 5. Validation workshop held and knowledge management products finalized and submitted.		25%

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<p>Minimum Qualifications required:</p> <p>Bachelors Masters PhD Other</p> <p>Enter Disciplines – Primary and/or Secondary Education/Pedagogy, Education Development, Education Policy, Social Policy, International Relations, or related field</p>	<p>Knowledge/Expertise/Skills required:</p> <p><u>Qualifications:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A minimum of 10 years of experience in Early Childhood Care and Development (ECCD) Education research, evaluation and implementation and education policy. • Expert level technical knowledge about Early Childhood Development and Education, with demonstrated technical work experience on early learning provision, pedagogy, and curriculum. • Deep familiarity and understanding of ECCDE context and culture in developing context, especially sub-Saharan Africa. Strong knowledge of the Nigerian (or at least other developing countries) context and understanding of international development issues, including the status of the humanitarian-development nexus nationally and at the state level in Nigeria, particularly as it relates to education for girls and marginalized populations. <p><u>Other skills and attributes:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • working in or as a direct consultant for UN organizations is considered an asset • Excellent written and oral communication skills in English, with experience translating evidence for and communicating with a broad range of actors (including government) on sensitive issues • Ability to present ideas concisely for diverse audiences and to give practical, actionable advice grounded in evidence
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	<p><u>Language requirements:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fluency in English is required. 	
<p>Application and Selection: All applicants will be screened against qualifications and requirements set above. Candidates fully meeting all the requirements will be further evaluated based on the criteria below.</p> <p>1. Technical Criteria – Review of CV and Interview – 80 % of total evaluation– max. 80 points</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Education: 25 points • Previous experience: 25 points • Technical questions at the interview: 30 point • Only candidates who obtained at least 80% of points from the technical part (who will score at least 64 points) will be qualified for considering for financial proposal evaluation. <p>2. Financial Criteria - 20 % of total evaluation – max. 20 points.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Financial scores will be calculated using the formula [lowest offer / financial offer of the candidate x 20]. 		
<p>Administrative details: Visa assistance required: Transportation arranged by the office:</p>	<p>Home Based Office Based: If office based, seating arrangement identified: IT and Communication equipment required: Internet access required:</p>	
<p>TOR prepared by</p>	<p>Approved by</p>	<p>Request Verified by HR:</p>